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NEWS *release*

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Telehealth Up and Running in Yukon Communities

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers today announced that all Yukon communities have improved health care services with the expansion of the Yukon Telehealth Network. Telehealth links patients from remote communities with clinicians at a distance through secure networks.

"Today, every Yukon community has the ability to link through the Yukon Telehealth Network to provide increased health services and supports within that community," Cathers said. "This is a true feat of technology. The contribution from Canada Health Infoway and the hard work of dedicated people over the past number of years ensured that today arrived."

The minister used the Diabetes Education Centre as a good example of how telehealth works.

"Individuals diagnosed with diabetes are not always able to travel to Whitehorse on a regular basis for training or support. The Diabetes Education Centre staff can connect with their clients in the communities through the telehealth network in the rural health centres to provide one-on-one sessions. This means that people don't have to leave their communities to get the services they need," Cathers added.

"Telehealth increases access to care for those from remote and isolated

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communities," Canada Health Infoway President and CEO Richard Alvarez said. "Today we are celebrating a real milestone for residents of all Yukon communities who, thanks to technology, now have increased access to much needed health care."

The Yukon Telehealth Network began in 2002. Old Crow, Dawson City, Mayo, Haines Junction, Watson Lake and Whitehorse were the initial communities; followed by Beaver Creek, Destruction Bay, Carmacks and Pelly Crossing. Communications technology has continued to improve where today telehealth can be implemented in all Yukon communities. This expansion has been accomplished by community nursing and information technology (IT) staff with funding from Canada Health Infoway.

Canada Health Infoway is a federally-funded, not-for-profit independent organization that invests with public sector partners across Canada to implement and reuse compatible health information systems which support a safer, more efficient healthcare system. Fully respecting patient confidentiality, these private and secure systems provide healthcare professionals with rapid access to complete and accurate patient information, enabling better decisions about diagnosis and treatment. The result is a sustainable, health care system offering improved quality, accessibility and productivity.

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